



# Kirra Surf Club Old Boys Association

## History and Traditions

### ***Kirra Past and Present Members Association:*** (Established: 17<sup>th</sup> May 1950)

During the 1950/1951 season of the Kirra Surf Life Saving Club, it was reported that marriage and work commitments continued to deplete the active membership of the surf club. In an effort to provide an opportunity for past active members to still be associated with their surf club and assist with beach patrols, the Kirra Past and Present Members Association was formed on the 17<sup>th</sup> May 1951 with eighteen members. Highly respected long serving Surf Club members Stan Hilton (*KSLSC Honorary Life Membership #32/1967*) was endorsed as President with Ralph Ford-Johnson (*KSLSC Honorary Life Membership #31/1966*) as Secretary.

The Association continued to function and during the 1953/1954 season, new Secretary Mac Jarden reported that regular bi-monthly meetings at Anzac House, Brisbane and social activities attracted good attendances. However, after a few short years the Kirra Past and Present Members Association ceased to exist owing to insufficient members to continue to maintain it as a viable organisation. Whilst the main purpose for this Association was to provide social interaction for its members and support active roles for the Surf Club, it may be considered as the forerunner to the future Kirra Old Boys Association.

### ***Kirra Old Boys Association:*** (Established: 29<sup>th</sup> November 1978)



A meeting arranged by Ron Gurnett (*KSLSC Honorary Life Membership #38/1973*) and attended by more than forty past and present long serving Kirra SLSC members was held on the **29<sup>th</sup> November 1978** at the International Hotel, Spring Hill in Brisbane (Licensee: Bill Wright – long serving Kirra SLSC member and Club Vice-Captain 1966/67 and 1991/92).

At this meeting those present unanimously supported and celebrated the formation of the Kirra Old Boys Association. Ron Gurnett was endorsed as the inaugural Association President with Bob Littler (*KSLSC Honorary Life Membership #39/1974*) as Secretary. Graham Byrnes (*KSLSC Honorary Life Membership #29/1963*), who was a wonderful conduit for the new Association with those past Kirra Surf Club members of the 1940/1950/1960 eras being endorsed as Treasurer. However, after a short period of time owing to work and family commitments, Graham stood down from the position of Treasurer. Long term Kirra SLSC active member Jim Schofield was invited and accepted the position of Treasurer.

#### **Attendance: Inaugural Kirra Old Boys Association meeting – 29<sup>th</sup> November 1978**

*(Names as recorded in the Meeting Attendance Register)*

**Ron Gurnett; John Bowler; Steve Paul; Ross (Bundy) Edmonds; Bob Littler; Graham Byrnes; Jim Schofield; Barry Robinson; Vic Arnall; Garry Power; Cameron Leagh-Murray; Mal Stockwell; Lech Gacia; Tom Laffan; Dennis Boucher; Keith Boucher; Greg Dunn; John Littler; Roger Cresswell; Colin Wright; Bob Gear; Ron Porter; Graham Booth; Carl Godwin; Barry Godwin; Peter Beauchamp; Keith Hamilton; Barrie Thorne; Stan Hilton; Col Heydt; Roger Hawkes; Graham Stephens; Jim Steel; Max Greatorix; Terry Challenger; Malcolm Jardeen; Dave Seeley; Barry Cameron; Mick Mulchay; and Jim Devlin.**

The Association's foundation committee was determined in their endeavours to building and sustain the Kirra Old Boys Association. Their focus remained on membership recruitment; building fellowship through annual social events; and coordinating successful revenue generating activities. Through the committee's outstanding recruitment efforts, the Association quickly achieved almost three hundred past and present long serving Kirra SLSC members recorded on the Membership Register.

With membership being mainly Brisbane based, the Kirra Old Boys Association held its Annual General Meetings; Old Boys Reunions; and Christmas Keg at venues including the Brisbane Anzac Club; Valleys (Diehards) Rugby League Football Club; the Railway Institute Building; and the Woolloongabba Hotel. These annual events attracted good attendance numbers with all those present acknowledging the very successful initiatives of the incumbent *'Office Bearers'*.

Through its many successful revenue generating activities, the Kirra Old Boys Association established itself and continued to remain a long term financial benefactor for sustaining the building assets, historical memorabilia, and the many operational resources of the Kirra Surf Life Saving Club. Numerous examples of the financial sponsorship and support provided to the Kirra Surf Club are highlighted in the publication: *'Kirra SLSC 100 years by Peter D Kelly'* published for the Kirra SLSC 100<sup>th</sup> Year Celebrations held in January 2016.

In Year 1982, the Kirra Old Boys Association was called upon to provide significant financial and in-kind contribution to the Kirra Surf Club through the provision of bar and refrigeration equipment; furnishings; tables and chairs; carpets; and assistance with building construction trade skills from its members. This enabled the Kirra Surf Club's committee of that time to finally establish the *'Kirra Old Boys Lounge'* that occupied the first level of the major building extensions of the western end of the Kirra Beach Pavilion that was built by the Surf Club in Year 1975. The Kirra Old Boys Lounge contained historical memorabilia that was installed through additional sponsorship provided by the Association and showcased the Kirra SLSC's significant history as the second oldest surf lifesaving club in Queensland (established 7<sup>th</sup> January 1916) and one of the longest continuously operating surf lifesaving clubs in Australia.

The Kirra Old Boys Lounge with its then many unique Surf Club historical displays evolved into what is now the licensed Kirra Supporters Club *'Bar and Bistro'*. The Kirra Old Boys Association continues to regularly provide financial assistance through periodic donations and in-kind support for the maintenance and upgrade of this popular licensed surf club facility.

For several beach patrol seasons during the 1990s when the surf club found it difficult to have sufficient active membership to fill its weekend patrol rosters, the Kirra Old Boys Association stepped in and coordinated the provision of long serving and past active members qualified to perform beach patrols for a full weekend every month. These experienced surf club members would fulfil all surf lifesaving requirements to be deemed proficient to perform their rostered beach patrols.



As the foundation President for the Kirra Old Boys Association, Ron Gurnett remained continuously in the position for sixteen years as President until 1994. He was endorsed as the Association President for a further two year term from 2001. With Ron's endorsement as President, Ken Meehan maintained his long-term involvement as Secretary. Kirra SLSC member Jim Harrison (*KSLSC Honorary Life Member #59/2001*) was endorsed as the Association's Treasurer.

***"Left (L-R): Ken Meehan and Ron Gurnett: Kirra SLSC Honorary Life Members enjoying an evening at a surf club function in the Kirra Old Boys Lounge (Year 1995)"***

After more than forty years since its foundation of the Association in Year 1978, Ron continues to maintain a strong interest and actively supports the Association.

With Ken Meehan (*KSLSC Honorary Life Member #33/1968*) return to the Kirra Surf Club in the late 1980s after several years working in south-east Asia, he enthusiastically took on the role of President, Kirra Old Boys Association in 1994 and would continue to hold this position and

support the Association for a further seven years. Ken Meehan was an organising force for the Kirra Old Boys Association through the continued involvement in the Kirra Surf Club annual house to house collections and assistance for the annual Beach to Breakers Ocean Series event. Several past Kirra Old Boys Association members also supported the annual Ocean Series event held at Kirra Beach with sponsorship for event winners; coordinating activities and logistics for the competition on the day of the event; and staffing the public catering facilities provided that gained additional revenue for the Kirra Surf Club.

In Year 2003 Ken Meehan was again endorsed as the Association's President. However, with his sad passing in Year 2004, Kirra SLSC Honorary Life Members Bob Littler and Ron Gurnett took up the challenge and accepted endorsement as the Kirra Old Boys Association's President and Secretary respectively at the meeting held at the Pineapple Hotel on the 5<sup>th</sup> November 2004. Long term Kirra Surf Club member Barrie Thorne (*KSLSC Honorary Life Member #42/1977*) was endorsed that year as the Association Treasurer.

Association President Bob Littler reported in the Year 2006 Kirra SLSC Annual Report that there were two hundred and fifty-three past active and current long serving Kirra Surf Club members registered with the Association. He further noted that the Association had successfully raised sufficient funds by way of its revenue generating activities over recent years that allowed the Kirra Old Boys Association to generously provide a donation of \$25,000.00 to the Kirra SLSC's committee.

Since the early 1970s when he managed the Acacia Ridge Hotel, long time Kirra Surf Club supporter Bob Singleton (*KSLSC Life Governor Membership #4/2012*) has continuously for fifty years supported both the Kirra Surf Life Saving Club and the Kirra Old Boys Association through his sponsorship and generous support of many fund raising activities, hotel raffles and major function events. With the Singleton Family in the 1990s taking over the Pineapple Hotel that is located just a short walking distance to the famous Gabba Cricket Ground, the Kirra Old Boys Association now had a venue in Brisbane that became its base of operations.



For more than thirty years the famous Pineapple Hotel has been the preferred venue of choice for the annual Kirra Old Boys Association functions and events, including: Christmas Reunions; Annual General Meetings; Life Member Dinners; and more recently the venue for the very successful Kirra Sports Luncheons.

In Year 2009, a change of leadership occurred for the Kirra Old Boys Association with highly respected and long serving Kirra Surf Club members Keith Boucher (*KSLSC Honorary Life Member #71/2017*) and Lance English (*KSLSC Honorary Life Member #67/2012*) accepting the roles of President and Secretary respectively. Rick Sellwood (*KSLSC Honorary Life Member #45/1981*) was endorsed as Treasurer.



***"Left (L-R): Bob Littler, Ron Gurnett and Keith Boucher all served as the President for the Kirra Old Boys Association from its foundation in Year 1978 to Year 2017 – here catching up in the licensed Kirra Supporters Club (the Kirra Old Boys Lounge)"***

This newly elected committee (Year 2009) continued to advance the aims of the Association, and regularly attended and supported major events organised by the Kirra Surf Club. During their tenure on the committee they endeavoured to sustain the membership numbers, and enhanced the fellowship events and financial activities of the Association. Long serving Kirra Surf Club member John Bell

(KSLSC Honorary Life Member #70/2015) embraced the Association's revenue generation challenges with outstanding success. His input to the planning and coordination of the successful annual Kirra Sports Luncheons held at the Pineapple Hotel ensured a continuing stream of revenue for the Association.

As is further detailed in 'PD Kelly's – Kirra SLSC 100 years' published in 2016, the Kirra Old Boys Association continued to regularly provide significant financial and in-kind support for the Kirra Surf Club. Kirra Old Boys Association's financial contributions assisted with building improvements and renovations to the Kirra SLSC clubhouse and the Kirra Supporters Club Bar/Bistro; provided beach patrol equipment and uniforms; supported the purchase of powered rescue craft; and so much more. During the 2013/2014 season, accommodation renovations upstairs in the Kirra clubhouse were finally completed through the very generous financial support package provided by the Beavis and Bartels Families; and with a further major donation from the Kirra Old Boys Association.



**“Left: Kirra SLSC legends in the Kirra Supporters Club Bar/Bistro – (L-R): KSLSC Hon Life Member Michael Hill; KSLSC Hon Life Member Lance English; Cheryll Fenton (Kirra SLSC first female Club Captain 1996/1997 and first female Club President 2022/2023); KSLSC Hon Life Member Keith Boucher; and KSLSC Hon Life Member Ron Gurnett (Foundation President – Kirra Old Boys Association)”**

Former Association Secretary and Kirra SLSC Honorary Life Member Lance English commented that since the formation of the Kirra Old Boys Association on the 29<sup>th</sup> November 1978, it would not be unreasonable to assume that over the subsequent forty years up to one million dollars has been provided to the Kirra Surf Life Saving Club by the Association and its membership through donations and in-kind support.

In-kind support provided by Association members comes in many forms. This has been provided on numerous occasions by Kirra Old Boys Association members through the provision of professional and industry technical knowledge and skills; providing building engineering plans for renovations and extensions to the Kirra Surf Club; the provision of trades skilled staff and building product that in many instances was at no cost to the surf club; volunteer staffing for surf club major events and House to House Collections; and maintaining beach patrols on those occasions when the Kirra Surf Club had insufficient members to perform such duties..... *“These are memories that have lasted a life time!”*

After eight years at the helm of the Kirra Old Boys Association, Keith Boucher and Lance English determined that it was time for a change on the committee. At the annual 'Bumpo Freeman Remembrance Day' held in the Kirra Supporters Club Bar and Bistro on the 27<sup>th</sup> December 2017, those present endorsed Peter Beauchamp AFSM (KSLSC Honorary Life Member #49/1986) as the Association President; former Kirra SLSC President and long term member Adam Day (KSLSC Honorary Life Member #58/1998) as Secretary; and long serving past Kirra Surf Club honorary member Paul Cameron as a Committee Member.

This Association committee (endorsed Dec 2017) has introduced technology advancements such as web based communications with members; a new 'Old Boys' webpage included on the Kirra SLSC website; production and regularly circulation of monthly newsletters through MailChimp management systems; established a dedicated Old Boys email address; and utilises electronic banking strategies to improve business governance. The committee has also strengthened membership recruitment strategies targeting long serving and past active Kirra Surf Club members from the 1990/2000/2010 eras; established the annual Calendar of Events now available on the Kirra Surf Club website; continues to enhance revenue generating activities and events; sponsors the Kirra Historical Project with the business case

for this project endorsed by the Kirra SLSC committee in late 2018 and available on the Kirra Surf Club's website; and continues to engage with key surf lifesaving office bearers of the Kirra SLSC committee focusing on building good relationships for the overall benefit of the Kirra Surf Club Old Boys Association and the Kirra Surf Life Saving Club.



At the Association's forty-first AGM held 31<sup>st</sup> November 2019 at the Pineapple Hotel, the current committee were again supported by the members present to form the committee. Long serving Kirra Surf Club active member Mark Rogers was added as a Committee Member.

**“Above: Committee – Kirra Surf Club Old Boys Association: 2017 to 2023: (L – R) Mark Rogers (Committee Member); Paul Cameron (Committee Member); Peter Beauchamp (President); and Adam Day (Secretary)..... This photograph was taken at the successful 2021 Kirra Car Raffle draw that was held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October at the licensed Kirra Supporters Club”**

## **Our goals**

- # Providing past active Kirra SLSC members and families the opportunity to remain connected with their surf lifesaving club;
- # Promoting fellowship by encouraging past and current Kirra SLSC member participation in Association and Surf Club activities; and
- # Co-ordinating and supporting fund raising events for the membership of the Association and the Kirra Surf Life Saving Club.

## **Membership**

# In Year 2022 there are more than three hundred and twenty long serving and past Kirra SLSC male and female members in the Association.

*‘Once a Kirra member – always a Kirra member’*

*(Reference: Kirra SLSC 100 years by Peter D Kelly: 2016; Old Boys Newsletters; Records of Meetings; Attendance Registers and Minutes; Recall by past Old Boys Association Committee Office Bearers; etc)*



**Kirra Surf Life Saving Club**  
(Established 7<sup>th</sup> January 1916)

**“So the tradition continues – Once a Kirra member, always a Kirra member”**